

Pest Profile



Photo credit: By Jim Kalisch, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Common Name: Little Thief Ant

Scientific Name: *Solenopsis molesta*

Order and Family: Hymenoptera: Formicidae

Size and Appearance: Worker ants are monomorphic (one size) and roughly 1.3-1.8 mm in length. The ants are yellowish brown in color, have 10-segmented antennae with a 2-segmented club, as well as no spines on the thorax. They are often distinguished by their rounded profile.

	Length (mm)	Appearance
Egg	< 0.05 mm in length	White, round, eggs are laid by queen, sometimes having multiple queens. Colonies small for ants.
Larva/Nymph	0.2-2 mm in length depending on instar	Small, white, cylindrical body.
Adult	1.3-1.8 mm long depending on caste	Similar sized workers; yellowish brown in color, 10-segmented antennae with 2-segmented club, and no spines present on thorax. Rounded body. Small.
Pupa (if applicable)	1.5-2.5 mm long	Pupal cased formed from the last larval skin and is yellowish-brown in color. Size depends on caste.

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): Chewing

Host /s: *Solenopsis molesta* feed mostly on high protein-based foods such as dead animals, dairy, nuts, oils, and meats.

Description of Damage (larvae and adults): This species is mostly a nuisance pest and will enter homes in hot weather. They nest in crevices, woodwork, and wall voids and consume pantry materials. They can spread disease since they do occasionally feed on dead animals such as rats who carry diseases. They are known carries of *Raillietina tetragona* (poultry tapeworm) and may even be intermediate hosts.

References:

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